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Monsieur Aurelio Bilbao Barandica
Président du CC SUD
SWW RAC
6, rue Alphonse Rio
56100 Lorient
France

Subject **Proposal for a Western water management plan**

Your ref. *Advice 120 of 24 July 2018*

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's proposal to establish a pluriannual plan for fishing stocks in the Western Waters and the adjacent waters and for the fisheries exploiting these stocks.

In accordance with CFP Regulation 1380/2013, the adoption of pluriannual plans on the basis of scientific, technical and economic opinions is a priority. These plans aim to re-establish and maintain fishing stocks above the levels allowing the achievement of Maximum Sustainable Yield (**MSY**). The Commission's proposal for the Western Waters plan follows the examples of the Baltic Sea plan and the North Sea plan which have now come into force, and aims to achieve the objectives of the CFP, in particular the maximum sustainable yield by 2020 and the complete implementation of the landing obligation. As regards the Frmd objective, as for the Baltic Sea and North Sea pluriannual plans, the Commission's proposal establishes MSY "bands". These bands are based on the values recommended by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and allows management based on the MSY for the stocks concerned, whilst maintaining a high level of foreseeability.

I would like to remind you that during the drafting of the proposals, the Commission always takes the best scientific advice into consideration. However, in the absence of analytical scientific advice, it recommends the precautionary approach, as set out in article 6 of the United Nations agreement on fish stocks, according to which the absence of relevant scientific data should not serve as a justification for not adopting or for postponing the adoption of management measures designed to conserve the target species, the non-targeted associated or dependent species and their environment.

[†] COM(2018)149 of 18.4.2018

As regards alternative management measures to the TACs, the Commission takes note of SWWAC's proposals to analyse the possibility of withdrawing certain species from the TAC system and would be happy to receive a contribution from SWWAC on the concrete alternatives to be envisaged. The Commission has, for its part, requested a scientific opinion from ICES on the necessity of managing some stocks by means of TACs.

With respect to the possibility of drawing up exploitation rules in the framework of regionalisation, the Commission would like to draw your attention to the fact that even in the absence of a formal legal framework, the Commission and the Council can take account of the opinions of the Advisory Councils (including SWWAC) on management measures, given that the recommendations expressed in these opinions do not depart from the provisions of the pluriannual plan.

I would like to thank you for the work you have carried out and for your cooperation. I would invite you to contact Mrs Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu, +32.2.295.62.73) should you require any additional information regarding this reply.

Yours faithfully

Joao AGUIAR MACHADO

Copy: Msrs Veits, Roller, Kirchner, Colson, Krampe, de Diego

Signed electronically on 26/09/2018 16:07 (UTC+02) in accordance with article 4.2 (Validity of electronic documents) of the Commission's decision 2004/563